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Frequently Asked Questions: Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements

What happens when an individual does not "pass" a given proficiency?

If time is a variable, then there is not an event that would mark 'not passing.' Information about a student's status relative to the standards would be considered in a formative context and continuing instruction designed to enable the student to meet the proficiency.

How soon before graduation does the process of demonstrating a given proficiency begin?

The demonstration of proficiency against the standards begins when the student enters the school system. Referring specifically to the graduation requirements, it is conceivable that proficiencies may be met anywhere along the grade continuum. However, since there should be multiple demonstrations of proficiency over time, most students will meet these proficiency-based graduation expectations during high school.

Could a 9th (or 10th or 11th) grader demonstrate all of the proficiencies and graduate at the end of that year?

While this is possible, there may be good reason for a student to continue taking advantage of learning opportunities in high school. For example, the student may decide to improve proficiency and college readiness by participating in a dual enrollment course. And it is also possible to continuously improve on one's proficiency beyond the graduation expectation. The hope is that students will choose to do so and take advantage of the opportunity.

How is the new system of proficiency-based learning being rolled out?

Minimally, this year's 7th graders will progress to graduation in a proficiency-based system. In practice, that probably means having the system in place when those students become 9th graders. Next year's 7th graders will likely be in the system as 8th graders. Eventually, hopefully no later than 2 years down the road, every new 7th grader will enter a proficiency-based system, so that by 2020 every secondary student (7-12) will be progressing through and graduating in that system.

What happens to class ranking and valedictorians and salutatorians?

In a personalized, proficiency-based system such rankings become irrelevant. The hope is that there will be other ways to acknowledge and honor student achievement, but it would not be based on class rank.

How many times and at what intervals can a student retry demonstrating a proficiency that has not been passed?

This question implies a limitation on the nature and purpose of performance and assessment, and suggests that some students may not be capable of demonstrating proficiency in our pre-conceived format or timeline. The failure implied in the question is not a failure of the student, but rather a failure of instruction and assessment strategies.

Who is going to be the arbiter(s) of a student's having demonstrated proficiency?

That is a local decision. However, the [Education Quality Standards](#) (EQS) require that “any credits earned must occur under the supervision of an appropriately licensed educator.” EQS also requires the development and implementation of a local comprehensive assessment system, which will also address this question.

What is the intention behind the word “including” in the content areas?

The word, “including,” connected to the content standards in the Education Quality Standards means minimally, but not exclusively.